



Ohio Children's Hospital Association

Saving, protecting and enhancing children's lives

December 18, 2017

Re: Children's Health Insurance Program

Dear Members of the Ohio Congressional Delegation:

I am writing today to urge your support in reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). On behalf of the six members of the Ohio Children's Hospital Association and the nearly quarter of a million children who rely on CHIP in Ohio for their health care coverage, **we respectfully and strongly ask that you act as soon as possible to provide a five-year extension of funding for the program, at the current enhanced match**, to ensure kids continue to have access to quality healthcare.

Federal funding expired on September 30, 2017 and Ohio is now set to run out of funds by February of 2018. Ohio has a reported 220,098 enrollees on average in state Fiscal Year 2018 under the CHIP program.

Failure to pass a CHIP reauthorization bill has spread uncertainty and angst to families and state government, as the current state of Ohio budget was constructed on the assumption CHIP dollars would be forthcoming at historical levels. Without immediate action by Congress, Ohio will face a budget shortage of more than \$200 million over the next two years due to the abrupt federal match reduction that will impact the kids on Medicaid who are enrolled through CHIP. **It is critical the program be reauthorized by the end of the calendar year** to protect children who rely on this important program and safeguard Ohio's budget for the remainder of the biennium.

CHIP has a proven track record of providing **high-quality, cost-effective coverage for low-income children in working families**. CHIP is a federal-state partnership that, along with Medicaid, has resulted in the highest children's health insurance coverage rate on-record. Since its inception in 1997, the program has seen staunch, bipartisan success for 20 years, continuously receiving support for reauthorization. Thus far, states and families have never experienced the program's failure to continue under such abrupt circumstances.

We urge you to act now to protect Ohio's kids and stabilize the state's current budget by enacting the strong five-year extension of CHIP as supported by the House and Senate. We look forward to working with you to ensure all Ohio children have access to the healthcare they need when they need it.

Sincerely,

Nick Lashutka
President and CEO
Ohio Children's Hospital Association

